

We are pleased to announce that the VA Boston Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program recently received funding for one additional fellow within **Behavioral Medicine**, allowing us to recruit for a total of two Postdoctoral Fellows in Behavioral Medicine. This additional funding will allow for more in-depth training in existing clinical contexts (e.g., Sleep, Pain, Bariatrics), as well as new clinical settings. New training settings include Primary Care (Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, as well as Primary Care Mental Health Integration) and Psychosocial Oncology.

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Location: VA Boston Healthcare System
Jamaica Plain and Brockton Campuses

Overview: The Behavioral Medicine Program provides a broad range of services to medical populations throughout the VA Boston Healthcare System, including outpatient mental health, primary care, and specialty medical clinics. In addition to participating in specific groups and clinics, postdoctoral Fellows work with individual patients on a broad range of behavioral medicine issues, often in the context of interprofessional teams. Treatment is geared toward helping patients cope effectively with major medical illnesses and invasive treatments, promoting healthy lifestyles, encouraging treatment compliance, and enhancing overall quality of life. Much of the treatment provided on Behavioral Medicine is short-term, cognitive-behavioral, and problem-focused, although there is also the opportunity to do less structured, longer-term treatment. The fellows will be primarily based on the Jamaica Plain Campus, but will spend up to two days per week at the Brockton Campus.

Number of Fellows: Two full-time Fellows are admitted each year.

Length of Training: One year.

Goals: The broad goal for Behavioral Medicine training at the fellowship level is for the fellow to gain advanced competence in those skills that will allow him or her to function as an independent psychologist at the conclusion of the training year, with expertise in Behavioral Medicine. To reach this goal, the fellows will be immersed in an array of clinical experiences that will allow for further development of assessment, case conceptualization and treatment planning, psychotherapy (individual, group, couples), and consultation/liaison, with a medically compromised patient population and/or those seeking healthy lifestyle changes. Specific clinical settings and opportunities are described in

detail below. In addition to direct clinical work, fellows will have the opportunity to develop professional skills, particularly as they relate to diversity, ethics, and legal issues, and will devote time to scholarly inquiry activities.

Additionally, training is provided in several areas that most psychology trainees have little exposure to prior to the fellowship year. First, to develop program management and administrative skills, the Fellows will receive training in and be responsible for managing the Behavioral Medicine consult services during their training year. This involves managing clinic patient flow, assessment and triage, ongoing consultation with medical providers, and assignment of patients to more junior trainees. The Fellows will also have an immersive supervision experience, having the opportunity to supervise more junior trainees (i.e., an intern or practicum student). The Fellows will receive support through supervision of supervision as they begin to develop and fine-tune their supervisory style. Finally, the Fellows will be given the opportunity to engage in program development activities based on facility need. In the past several years, Fellows have been critical in developing services in cardiology and pulmonary clinics, as well as a sleep management program.

The Fellows will collaborate with the Track Coordinator and their primary supervisor to devise a training plan that is based on the intersection of the Fellows' training goals and needs, previous experience, and existing rotations. We describe the clinical training experiences below and provide indication of which activities are considered core components and which activities are elective. Fellows will have the opportunity to rotate through many of the available experiences throughout the training year; core components will be negotiated at the start of the training year.

Core Components:

Primary Care Settings:

Primary Care Clinic, Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) Program: Working closely with the HPDP team in this Primary Care experience, the fellows will participate in shared medical appointments (SMAs) for a variety of chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, hypertension), through collaboration with interdisciplinary providers (e.g., pharmacists, nutritionists, nurses). The fellows will also spend time embedded within primary care clinics providing brief motivational interviewing and health coaching interventions to patients, and will be able to offer individual weight management and smoking cessation treatment to patients. This rotation offers the fellow opportunities to integrate with the Primary Care teams as a critical member of an interdisciplinary treatment team.

Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI): PCMHI offers co-located, immediate, and collaborative care for veterans who would benefit from brief assessment and interventions to address a broad range of mental health conditions within Primary Care. Communication and liaison with the Primary Care team is essential; the fellows will develop proficiency in providing consultation to primary care staff on mental health issues, including risk management.

Specialty Medical Clinics:

End Stage Renal Disease Program: One of the Fellows will serve as the primary liaison with the multidisciplinary treatment team and Behavioral Medicine, though both Fellows will see patients on the renal dialysis unit. Issues addressed with this population include adherence to treatment and dietary restrictions, needle phobias and other anxiety reactions, death and dying, coping with a chronic illness, quality of life, family issues, and affective disorders.

Psychology Pain Management Clinic: Fellows will work alongside pain medicine physicians and nurse practitioners, neurologists, and alternative medicine providers (e.g., acupuncture), in addition to other interdisciplinary providers (e.g., nurses, pharmacists, addiction psychiatry) to provide patient-centered care to veterans with chronic pain. The Fellows are actively involved in conducting comprehensive pain assessments, presenting patients at multidisciplinary rounds, and providing short-term, individually based cognitive-behavioral therapy for chronic pain management, and assisting with an interdisciplinary weekly opioid taper clinic.

Behavioral Medicine Sleep Medicine Program: The Fellows will have an opportunity to provide services for individuals who are suffering from insomnia and other sleep difficulties. Fellows will learn how to conduct a focused sleep interview, run a sleep education group, and provide cognitive-behavioral therapy for insomnia through their work in this program.

Psychosocial Oncology: This experience will expose Fellows to the clinical, teaching, and interprofessional role of a psychologist in psychosocial oncology. The Fellows will have the opportunity to provide individual psychotherapy to patients with cancer within the Geriatric Mental Health Clinic at the Brockton Campus. Involvement in the ENT Tumor Board and/or the Cancer Committee may be optional. Interested students can participate in psychosocial oncology research with Jenny Moye, Ph.D. and colleagues.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Program: The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program is an interdisciplinary program that provides services to patients who need physical, psychological, social, and nutritional rehabilitation due to disabilities resulting from MI, angina, coronary artery bypass graft, or congestive heart failure. The goal of the program is to improve the patients' daily functioning through exercise, education and cognitive-behavioral interventions. Fellows have an opportunity to conduct a psychoeducational group that is run in conjunction with the larger interdisciplinary rehab program. There is also a Cardiac Support Group for patients who could benefit from the support of other patients with similar cardiac issues.

Pre-Treatment Evaluations:

Transplant Program: The Fellows will have the opportunity to evaluate patients who are being considered for organ transplantation. The purpose of these evaluations is to determine the candidates' psychological readiness for transplantation (including kidney, liver, heart, lung, and

bone marrow). The comprehensive evaluation includes psychometric testing and a structured interview.

Transgender Program: The Fellows will have the opportunity to conduct pre-treatment evaluations for transgender veterans who are seeking cross-sex hormone treatment or gender reassignment surgery. Responsibilities include: conducting standardized interviews to assess eligibility and readiness for treatment, preparing detailed reports, providing behavioral recommendations for enhancing readiness for treatment, attending interdisciplinary transgender team meetings.

Bariatric Surgery Program: Working closely with the interdisciplinary treatment team, the Fellows will have the opportunity to provide comprehensive evaluations of patients being considered for bariatric surgery to determine their psychological appropriateness for the procedure. There are also opportunities to provide short-term treatment to assist patients in making the necessary lifestyle changes both pre- and post-surgery, conduct post-surgical evaluations to assess mental status and adjustment following surgery, and co-lead a monthly Bariatric Support Group.

Elective Components:

MOVE! Weight Management Program: The MOVE! Weight Management Program offers multidisciplinary groups co-led by the Behavioral Medicine and Nutrition Programs. Group members receive education on healthy eating and lifestyle change and learn strategies that support weight loss and healthy living more generally. Groups are open to both male and female overweight and obese veterans. Fellows involved in this program will gain experience working in a multidisciplinary setting and conducting cognitive-behavioral interventions to facilitate weight loss and health promotion.

Andrology Clinic: The Andrology Clinic is an outpatient sexual dysfunction assessment and treatment service. The Fellows will have the opportunity to complete comprehensive assessments of sexual functioning and problem-focused sex therapy for veterans and their significant others.

Smoking Cessation Program: The Fellows will have the opportunity to co-lead smoking cessation groups with other psychology staff and with pharmacy staff. The group approach offers support, motivational enhancement, and cognitive-behavioral strategies.

Healthy Lifestyle Groups: The Behavioral Medicine Program conducts three different groups that are designed to promote healthy lifestyles. These groups focus on adaptive coping and are particularly important for individuals with major medical issues. The following groups are conducted regularly:

- **Stress Management Group:** A twelve-week group for individuals interested in learning stress management skills. Patients learn cognitive-behavioral stress management and relaxation techniques.

- **Healthy Thinking Group:** A ten-week group for medical patients who also have symptoms of depression. Patients learn cognitive-behavioral strategies to address their negative thoughts and learn ways to cope more effectively with their medical illness.
- **Medical Issues Group:** An ongoing group for individuals who are coping with the stress of having major medical issues. This is an educational/support group that focuses on helping people find adaptive ways to cope with their medical conditions and treatments.

Teaching Methods: There are several methods that are used to train the Behavioral Medicine Fellows, and they include:

Didactics: The Behavioral Medicine Program has a weekly team meeting where didactics are regularly provided. These team meetings are also used to discuss clinical cases, research interests, and current issues in behavioral medicine. Each specialty clinic in which the Fellows participate begins with didactic training specific to the clinic setting, with the goal of providing specialized training in a range of content areas. There is also a bi-weekly research meeting on Behavioral Medicine where research training is provided on a range of relevant topics. The Fellows have the opportunity to participate in several multidisciplinary treatment team meetings where they are able to learn about chronic conditions from professionals from different disciplines (e.g., physicians, nutritionists, social workers, pharmacists, nurses).

Supervision: Dr. DeAnna Mori is the Director of the Behavioral Medicine Program and provides leadership for the postdoctoral training program in Behavioral Medicine. Each Fellow will have a primary supervisor who will oversee their training experience, and they will also work with staff psychologists and professionals from other disciplines who serve as supervisors and consultants to the program. The other licensed psychologists who may supervise the Fellows include: Amy Silberbogen, Ph.D., Sari Chait, Ph.D., Sarah Bankoff, Ph.D., Risa Weisberg, Ph.D., Jenny Moye, Ph.D., Stephen Lancey, Ph.D., John Otis, Ph.D., and Diana Higgins, Ph.D.

The Fellows will receive both individual and group supervision, and clinical, career development and research issues are addressed in supervision. The Fellows will also learn how to supervise other trainees under the guidance of clinical staff. In addition, the fellows will have opportunities to work closely with professionals from other disciplines with different areas of expertise.

Fellows have opportunities to directly observe licensed staff psychologists in practice. For example, Fellows will watch licensed psychologists conduct various evaluations (e.g., pre-treatment, pre-surgical, pain, andrology) or engage in other clinical or professional activities, and senior staff may co-lead a group with the Fellows.

Research and Program Development: Involvement in behavioral health research is an integral part of the Fellows' training. Most of the supervisors on Behavioral Medicine are actively involved in clinical research, and are investigators on currently or recently funded protocols. The Fellows will be encouraged to identify research activities that would expand their current skill set. There are a wide

range of opportunities available to the Fellows that include: grant writing, running studies, data analysis, preparing papers and presentations, interfacing with the local IRB board, etc. Areas of ongoing research include: telehealth, oncology, diabetes, hepatitis C, exercise and healthy lifestyle promotion, PTSD and comorbid chronic medical conditions, medical adherence, pain, health literacy, and mindfulness.

Fellows also participate in program development activities during their training year. Areas of development are determined by the needs of the veterans served at VA Boston, and by Fellows interest and expertise. In addition, the clinical programs in Behavioral Medicine are continuously updated to incorporate new evidence-based practices and to adapt to changing needs and patient preferences. Fellows often lead these ongoing development efforts that keep our clinical programs current and running smoothly.

Please refer to the VA Boston Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Brochure (<http://www.boston.va.gov/psychologytraining/fellowship.asp>) for comprehensive information about the training program and how to apply. This document replaces the Behavioral Medicine description embedded in the existing (uploaded) VA Boston Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Brochure.